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Setting the Scene: Statue Wars and Ungrateful Citizens

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Let's take a walk in a park.[1] We are going to visit a statue on the day of its unveiling. It is 1879 and one of those sweltering hot Sydney afternoons when the air is so fetid with dust and sweat and horse shit, that most people would probably prefer to preserve their energy until the southerly comes through. [2] Not that there is much chance of that for the twelve thousand or so respectable gentlemen who are now dressed in their military uniforms and Sunday best and making their way through the gardens to where a colossal form stands, surrounded by clusters of evergreens, seventy flagpoles, each nearly fifty feet high, and a grandstand packed with approximately one hundred thousand Sydneysiders, all munching on their peanuts and drinking ginger beer as they wait for the formalities to commence.[3] At last, drums and trumpets heralds the arrival of the procession and those in the stalls lean forward to watch the portly figure of the colonial secretary lead the parade to the foot of the giant plinth.

Many of us might now recognise Henry Parkes from his stocky physic, glowering eyes, and abundant beard. On that day, however, there are probably quite a few in the grandstand who can still remember the colonial secretary from his earlier days as one of the colony's most radical agitators and are less convinced by his new taste for imperial pomp.[4] 'He's come a long way', one old union leader mutters to his mate as they watch Parkes assume pride of place upon the platform erected for the dignitaries. 'Cunning to the last', his companion nods. Although, if Parkes was to overhear these comments, he would no doubt insist that rather than wily politicking, his accomplishments were the result of persistence and perseverance. And perhaps, in this instance, Parkes has a point, for it has taken more than a decade for the statue committee to realise this moment because, despite numerous funding drives, the public has remained reluctant to put their hands in their pockets.[5] Indeed, one newspaper was even compelled to condemn the people of New South Wales for being 'a most ungrateful citizenry'.[6]

And yet, since the government declared the day a public holiday, thousands upon thousands have come to cheer the men in frockcoats as they make their speeches and before triumphantly unveiling Thomas Woolner's giant statue of Captain James Cook.[7] 'Clouds of spectators' now cover the roof of the nearby Australian Museum, while hundreds perch upon the arms of gas lamps' and a few 'venturesome urchins' have even climbed out 'upon the limbs of trees. Among the dense crowd of pale faces' there are also, a newspaper notes, several "gentlemen of colour", including a few 'Australian aborigines' who are wearing most 'sombre visages'.[8]

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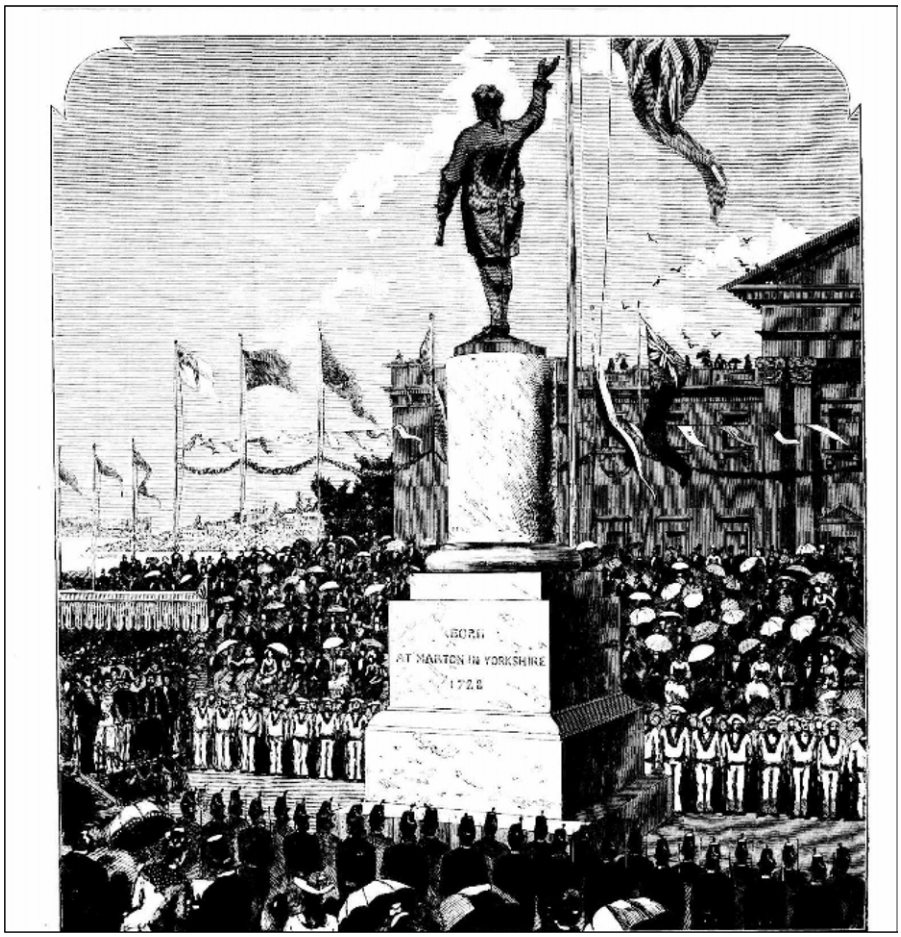
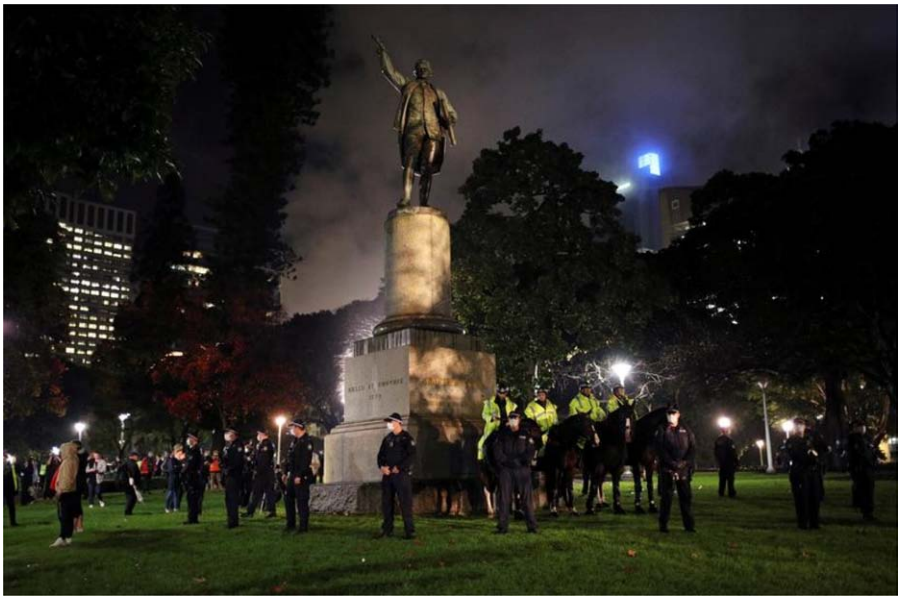
As the band strikes up a rousing round of 'Rule Britannia', 'hoary colonists' and pretty schoolgirls' rise with many military forces and members of the Grand United Order of the Fellows and begin to sing. Never has 'a more imposing spectacle' been 'witnessed across the entire continent of Australia', the paper coos in patriotic satisfaction. And yet, there are probably a few among the grandstand, perhaps those two old union mates, who suspect the public spectacle dedicated to the giant bronze figure now glistening before them, is just as much a celebration of Parkes' political ambition, as it is the accomplishments of the eighteenth-century explorer in question. Not that the statue itself is overlooked. Instead, a contemporary reviewer admires 'Mr Woolner's chef d'ouvre' as a work of 'force and spirit' before concluding with a rather prescient comment that it is 'in character sensational'.



'Unveiling Captain Cook's statue: View looking towards Port Jackson's Heads', *Illustrated News*, 22 March 1879

And right they were. For fast-forward now to a wet winter Friday evening in June 2020 as a party of mounted police defend the same statue with a group of armed colleagues as a posse of demonstrators march towards them, retracing the same steps of the colonial secretary and those twelve thousand well-dressed nineteenth-century gentlemen. 'Always was, always will be, Aboriginal land', the protestors chant through their COVID-19 safe masks, waving their banners and placards as they call for an end to the narrative of colonial progress that was so energetically promulgated on that hot afternoon in 1879. Despite the rain, the mood is hot and prickly, and any moment now there will be a confrontation, followed by two arrests and a

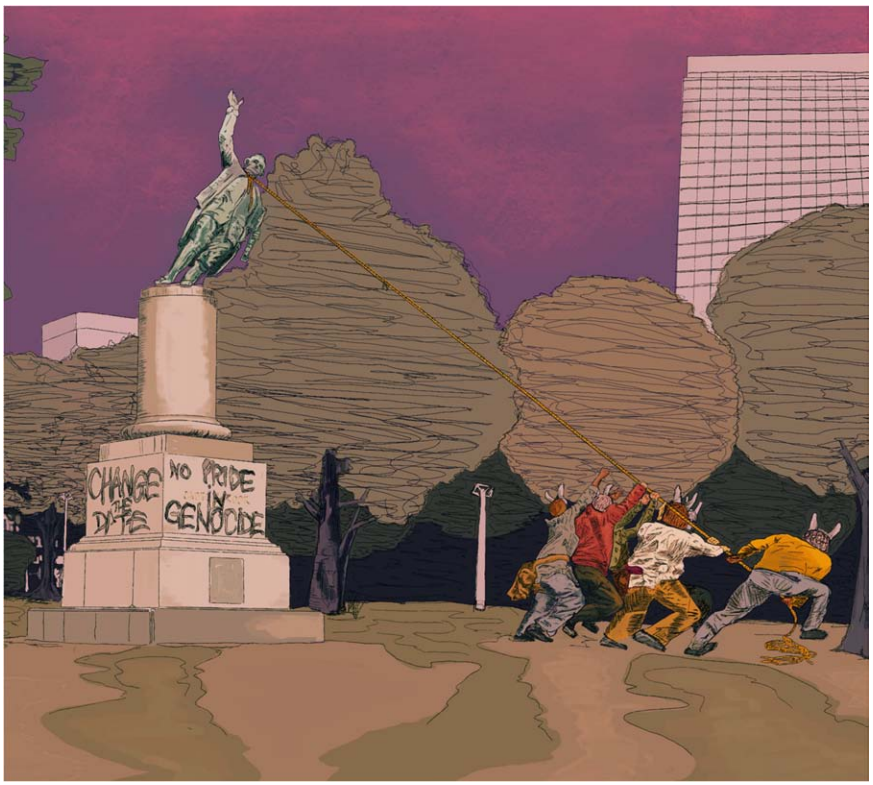
further explosion of outrage which ignites when a policeman allegedly gives one of the protestors a hand signal which the protestors associate with white supremacy.[9]



'Police officers stand guard around the statue of British explorer Captain James Cook as they deter demonstrators from taking part in a protest against police brutality and the death in Minneapolis police custody of George Floyd, in solidarity with the Black Lives Matter protests in the United States, in Sydney, Australia, June 12, 2020' REUTERS/Loren Elliott: https://www.reuters.com/article/us-minneapolis-police-protests-australia-idUSKB

Two moments of history-making; both at the base of one of Australia's most contentious statues, both demonstrating how this mute monolith continues to speak with such symbolic potency to both the past and contemporary politics. The first occurred during 'the heroic age' of Australian statuary and involved the sort of 'brass dogma' we now associate with the period of nation-building when politicians, such as Henry Parkes, were particularly anxious to settle a narrative of progress upon the yet-to-be federated country and its 'ungrateful citizens'.[10] The second is a much more recent clash in which a new generation of ungrateful citizens were yet again condemned for their ambivalence toward the same statue. Only this time, instead of consuming a triumphalist narrative of national progress with their peanuts, these ungrateful citizens marched through the rain to demand an end to the systemic social injustice that has flourished because of the very stories and structures Cook's statue celebrates.

For the front cover image of this special issue of *Public History Review*, we have chosen this 2019 digital print by Gamiliaroi artist Travis De Vries, entitled 'Tear it Down (Cook Falling)', which now also seems prescient of the 2020 Statue Wars for it imagines a scene of Aboriginal people, who might also be characterised as 'ungrateful citizens', physically pulling down that celebrated Cook statue in a pose which evokes the flag-raising on Iwo Jima In World War Two – another iconic history-making moment. The plinth itself is graffitied with counter statements that emphasise the connection between this nineteenth-century statue and the harmful national histories which glorify colonial regimes at the expense of the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Traditional Owners and Custodians of these lands.[11] De Vries's image not only reminds us that we are living at a moment when long supressed counter narratives are defiantly resurfacing and demanding to be heard; it also suggests a metaphorical connection between these protestors and 'the Australian aborigines' who stood 'sombre faced' among the celebratory crowds in 1879, who may,



Artwork: Tear it Down (Cook Falling), 2019 artist Travis De Vries (travisdevries.com). A print of this artwork was acquired by the Australian Museum for the 'Unsettled' exhibition.

in turn, have been descendants of the warriors who first discouraged the naval navigator from proceeding further into their country.

As these images and examples suggest, this special issue is concerned with episodes of conflict and collision, consultation and collaboration, contradiction and complexity which have been stimulated by various statues and engaged all sorts of different publics and history practices. As these practitioners have used not only their intellect, wit, and creative imagination, but also their bodies and emotions, even their spray cans, to emphatically reject (and defend) such contentious symbols of the past, we thought it a highly appropriate topic for the *Public History Review*. Drawing inspiration from City of Sydney historian Lisa Murray, who responded to conservative indignation about the graffiti which appeared on many statues in 2019 by suggesting that such 'vandalism' should be understood as an act of contemporary history-making because it demonstrates investment in place, memory and identity, we wanted to reflect upon the many different types of history practice these recent statue wars have stimulated. In the process we also wanted to consider if Murray's argument could be applied to the police who protect these public works and the politicians who spent taxpayer monies to defend their version of the past from such 'ungrateful citizens'? [12] Most importantly, perhaps we wanted to reflect upon what these Statues Wars reveal about our changing historical consciousness, the way we are reckoning with our pasts and the role of public historians in this complicated but vital process.

Although such contestations are hardly new, there was something distinctive about the way the brutal police murder of African-American man George Floyd on 25 May 2020 in the United States of America inspired thousands across the world to defy the COVID-19 lockdowns, step beyond the safety of their homes and onto the streets to express their outrage at that terrible moment of injustice. As they did so, many statues, which were already subjects of considerable contestation, suddenly became sites of intense

drama. Some were defaced, decapitated and in one notorious incident, dragged into the sea, triggering a conservative backlash among those who feared their 'relaxed and comfortable' perspective of the past was being fundamentally threatened.[13]

It was the way these long held tensions were unleashed in such vivid acts of public history making that compelled co-editor Kiera Lindsey to convene two seminars dedicated to the Statue Wars which were hosted by the History Council of NSW and Australian Centre for Public History at the University of Technology Sydney. In the first of these, 'Vandalism, Vindication and what to do with the Empty Plinth?', Lindsey asked Wiradjuri man and Australian Museum project officer Nathan mudyi Sentance, Bristol public historian Dr Jess Moody and Melbourne archaeologist Claire Baxter to consider these events from their professional perspectives, before reflecting upon the various collaborative and creative practices being employed while engaging with questions of removal or revision.[14] Are we encouraging effective conversations and community consultation about these processes, she asked; and how might we foster collaborations between historical research and creative practice to stimulate and support this process?

In the second session, 'Public Protest and Public History', Lindsey invited Yuin woman and fellow co-editor Mariko Smith, public historian Paul Ashton and historiographer Anna Clark to discuss that contentious statue of Cook in Sydney's Hyde Park.[15] While Ashton and Clark provided insight into the historical and historiographical contexts of this monument, Smith outlined the motivations and methods she was then contemplating while co-curating the now critically acclaimed 'Unsettled' exhibition at the Australian Museum.[16] Taking as her starting point the hypothetical idea of removing Cook's statue (located across the road from the College Street institution) and recontextualising it within the museum as part of that exhibition which itself is a response to the 250th Cook anniversary of 2020, Smith described how the dialogical responses from Australia's First Nations communities were providing powerful counter perspectives that promised to not only challenge the celebratory narratives of so-called 'peaceful' settlement but also figuratively 'unsettle' that statue from its plinth, just as De Vries print suggested.

As this special issue is based upon the above two-part discussion, we invited contributors to use a conversational tone in either a short opinion piece or longer scholarly reflection that shared their professional experiences and research interests. Eager to extend the conversation to other communities also wrestling with comparable challenges, we also invited several other history practitioners from New Zealand, the United Kingdom and Australia to write about specific case studies. Thus, the collection offers a series of both theoretical stimulations and practical provocations come from First Nations and non-First Nations archivists, activists and academics, councillors and curators regarding a host of different statues across the world. In so doing we hope this collection will illustrate, as Anna Clark observes in her contribution here, that while all history is 'unfinished business', public histories are often particularly dynamic because they demand a dialogue between stakeholders who frequently hold deeply different investments and understandings of the past in a particular area. Nor is the unfinished nature of public history-making confined to the past, as Tony Ballantyne reminds us in his rich reflection about the New Zealand context. For whether our responses are expressed with red paint, police guards, public decapitations or additive approaches to memorialisation or even special issues, the way we currently understand and practice the past is a product of historical change that is also likely to be subjected to scrutiny and change by future generations.

Of course, Ballantyne's call for consciousness regarding our own historiographical context is something many contributors have been reflecting upon for some time. Their sustained consideration of such questions ensures that the collection offers careful insight to a swathe of questions relating to the removal, replacement or revision of these statues, as well as what it means to weigh the educative value of these works against their professional reverence for historical archives and the pain such monuments continue to elicit among those who have already suffered so much that they do not, as Ballantyne notes, need to be further educated about the oppression that still routinely shapes their lives. But even while many contributors express professional

queasiness about having such historical evidence destroyed or removed and also differ about which strategies should be deployed to this purpose, most agree that as these acts of nineteenth-century history-making have become so incompatible with contemporary aspirations for a diverse and inclusive nation-state as well as growing demands for greater truth-telling that something must be done. The question is not only what, but also how and by whom. Together, our contributors draw upon numerous case studies that consider these complex issues from a range of perspectives in ways that we hope will encourage you to develop your own thoughts and practical responses. Many offer practical suggestions to the questions explored in the two seminars, namely: 'Should there be no statues, more statues, statues about statues, or perhaps no statues at all? Where should old statues go to die when the public declares them officially dead? And what precisely is the true historical value and educative merit of such public monuments anyway?' This special issue also reviews the various frameworks developed by artists, activists and historians as they consult and collaborate with different communities about these contested objects and pasts.

Despite this diversity of approaches and case studies, the contributions are connected by a common theme concerned with the various ways contemporary societies are now reckoning with the painful legacies of imperialism and colonialism. While we were initially drawn to produce this special issue because we struck by the way the 2020 statue wars dramatised many of these tensions and sensitivities, we also agree with Nathan Sentance's observation in this collection, that such reckoning is no longer 'a matter of history alone', but rather something that must concern us all because it is so inextricably connected with 'the ongoing injustices… in the present.'[17] Indeed, Sentance cautions us that however compelling the public spectacle of the Statue Wars, we must not allow this topic to distract us, for 'the goal' of the Black Lives Matter protestors which was to use the symbolism of those statues to expose ongoing systemic injustice and focus our attention and energies upon the creation of 'a more just society'. And to do that, Sentance insists, we must not only avoid the impulse to blame or become hyper defensive but also develop methods that encourage us to reflect carefully and collectively about what we preserve and protect and why.

Despite their common connections, the transnational case studies in the collection also demonstrate how distinctive contexts produce particular pasts that then shape different publics and public history practices. Bristol public historian, Jess Moody, for example, offers valuable context regarding the now infamous statue of British slave trader Edward Colston. Detailing the various ways local authorities had consistently ignored repeated requests made by community groups to have that statue removed, Moody reminds us that the dramatic events associated with the violent removal of Colston's statue in June 2020, were the climax on an ongoing feud which had been fuelled by decades of frustration felt by the systemic racial inequity in that town. And yet, as respected British public historian Hilda Kean observes in her contribution, despite the fervour of these current statue wars there has also been, she shows, a long history of public historians working with 'black and ethnic minority groups' to produce 'progressive memorials' that are based upon counter narratives. In addition to citing examples across Great Britain and Australia, Kean refers to a site-specific work entitled 'The Gilt of Cain', which was initiated by the Black British Heritage and erected in the financial heart of London in 2008, near a church with strong historical connections to the abolition movement. Such works, Kean argues, remind us that history-practitioners, artists and communities can work in solidarity and resistance against both the actual injustice but also its legacies in the present.

Just as English public historians continue to wrestle with the imperial legacies of racism and slavery, Australian and New Zealander practitioners are also grappling with the impact of settler-colonialism upon First Nations communities and culture. In her contribution in this collection, Western Australian historian Jenny Gregory recalls how a series of bitter contestations associated with a statue of a Noongar warrior named Yagan (circa 1795-1833), and that of Western Australian governor, Sir James Stirling. She describes how repeated acts of destruction are indicative of much deeper political tensions which frequently surface in the city of Perth because that society continues to be 'split in its attitudes' as 'multiple pasts' 'jostle for recognition'.

In response to Mariko Smith's in-seminar question about how we might 're-signify monuments' and 'bend cold stone' to accommodate more complex narratives, Bruce Scates describes the 'Public Action Project' he undertook with colleagues, Fremantle councillors and several Western Australian First Nations communities in 1994 to revise a 1913 Explorer's Monument which commemorated a group of 'intrepid pioneers' who perpetrated a massacre on that colony's shifting frontier. That monument was particularly distressing, Scates observes, for the way it not only proclaimed 'the white colonisation of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander lands', but quite explicitly celebrated the ethics of conquest and its practices of violent dispersal and dispossession. His fascinating contribution charts the process through which he and other collaborated with local councillors and First Nation communities to challenge the 'cult of disremembering' and eventually produce a form of dialogical memorialisation that now centres previously neglected First Nation voices and perspectives in ways that has stimulated an entirely new public conversation. Scates detailed reflection about the process of creating 'new, inclusive and explicitly disruptive narratives' about our 'deeply troubled past' also shows how such work involves 'a vast and collective undertaking' which required historians and community leaders to 'rally, reshape and refine' their collaboration skills to ensure that such acts of counter memorialisation are also effectively 'initiated and controlled by Aboriginal people'.

While many contributors refer to those who Paul Daley colourfully describes to in his expose as the 'assorted bastards of Australian History', Captain James Cook is unquestionably the most controversial and reoccurring figure throughout this collection. This is so, not only in Australia but also, as Tony Ballantyne shows, in New Zealand, where Maori communities and artists have recently transformed the Puhi Kai Iti/Cook Landing Site National Historic Reserve in New Zealand into a location which troubles the triumphalist narrative of Cook's 'discovery' of that area, by resurfacing ancient stories of Maori exploration and occupation. At the risk of too many 'Cooks' spoiling the collection, we close with Paul Ashton's short story which has been written for children and follows two university students as they participate in that winter protest at Cook's statue in Hyde Park in June 2020 before taking a tour of Sydney's statuary. Ashton's story exposes many of the grim realities concealed by the celebratory stories which are over privileged in many of Sydney's statues. This counter narrative raises rich questions about public memory that are likely to be particularly useful to teachers seeking to engage school children in this topic and for this purpose, Ashton includes a set of Teachers' Notes, Activities and 'Connections to the Australian Curriculum' at the conclusion of his work.

In her contribution, archaeologist Claire Baxter suggests that it can be useful to sidestep the historical debates about the value of these statues, by thinking of them instead as archaeological artefacts which offer evidence about 'human activities, believes and values'. To explore this idea, she takes us to the Eastern European statue parks she visited in Hungary, Lithuania and Russia. While such parks offer a potential solution regarding the relocation of works that no longer resonate with public tastes, it is essential each statue include sufficient contextual information about their creation, erection and removal, she argues, if they are to be of any educative value. Baxter is also interested in the potential of modern technology for including multivocal oral histories which recount when and why a statue became controversial, and also function as a repository for public responses to these works. Alive to the possibilities of less permanent, more performative forms of counter-memorialisation which use wit and ridicule to 'Address the Statue', Baxter also reminds us of public acts of defiance such as the Eastern European woman who regularly visited one statue to hang a basket of rotten fruit from the marble hand of a fallen dictator. Paul Daley, likewise, admires the playful public performativity of the protestor who hung a garland of potatoes around the neck of Queen Victoria, accompanied by a placard declaring her 'the Famine Queen', and another who graffitied the statue of Western Australian governor, Sir JAmes Stirling, by painting his imperial scroll with the colours of the Aboriginal flag.

In her survey of the various strategies used to counter what she calls 'the unwanted and discredited elements of the past', Christine Yeats reflects upon the efficacy of other statue parks in Lithuania, Hungary,

Moscow and Delhi. She suggests that rather than eradicate such works entirely from the public sphere, it may be of greater value to simply remove them from their pedestals and place them at ground level so that they are forced into democratic dialogue with those over whom they once towered. Another effective strategy Yeats considers involves reducing the most offensive of works to dust and metal before recycling them into monuments that explore 'both sides of history'. In addition to plaques or counter monuments, more consideration should be given, Yeats argues, to the idea proposed by First Nations Elder Aunty Rhonda Dixon-Grovenor, that some statues should be replaced with those of Aboriginal people'.[18] Reflecting upon the way we deal with not only the past but also the future, Yeats concludes that before we embark upon active collaborations it is crucial to develop new 'frameworks' that can acknowledge and accommodate divergent opinions so that communities are adequately supported as they 'open up' to painful discussions.

Like Yeats, many contributors observe that there can be no 'one size fits all' approach and that each monument needs to be assessed on an individual, case-by-case basis because there are, as Lindsey suggested in the seminar series, probably as many solutions as there are problematic statues. Some contributors are particularly interested in replacing the giant plinths and stone monuments associated with masculine models of nineteenth-century history making, with more transitory and playful, pluralistic and performative forms of contemporary commemoration such as walking tours, multimedia displays and dance. Whatever the approach, it is nonetheless vital that all future forms of memorialisation be subjected to and evolve from public discussions which are sensitive to the fact that both these statues and the pasts they represent have been a source pain to many in our community for a very long time.

To this end, Bruce Scates and Tony Ballantyne both outline the delicate negotiation process undertaken by local authorities, communities, and artists as they sought to produce these counter-memorials. Each illustrate, in distinctive ways, how such processes must seek out stories 'beyond the particularities of white archives' to ensure they effectively accommodate multiple voices and centre those who have been previously silenced and marginalised. In her contribution, Mariko Smith draws upon a local case study on the lands of Darug and GurinNgai in Northern Sydney to expresses a preference for an additive, rather than subtractive, approach that allows for intergenerational, dialogical memorialisation. Rejecting a zero-sum game where some are made to feel that their history or sense of belonging is completely taken away from them, she outlines an alternative which can avoid destructive deficit and divisive identity politics. Nor has it only been non-White people protesting statues and monuments, Smith stresses. Although she concedes that it is not necessarily a novel observation, Smith nonetheless insists that such qualifications are important in the current political climate where the diversity of protestors are often overlooked by those seeking to cast the Statue Wars in simplistic ways that threaten to reduce them to nothing more than racial Culture Wars fodder. By investigating a case study of the Major John André (of Revolutionary American history fame) monument in Tappan, New York State, Smith highlights how the dimension of class and power dynamics in respect of 'old' versus 'new' American values played out when it comes to the White Americans protesting and vandalising the monument.'

Also drawn to the American context, Paul Kiem describes how contemporary events have responded to the different forms of Confederate commemoration which have imposed a sanitised history of Civil War heroes upon the south since the late nineteenth-century in ways that include a set of highly contested statues along Monument Avenue in Richmond. Following the murderous acts of a white supremacist in 2015 and then a far-right protest in 2017, the Richmond City Council commissioned a report outlining four potential responses to these works, ranging from keeping these monuments, keeping and contextualising them, relocating or removing them altogether. Despite some dissatisfaction with the public meeting strategies associated with these recommendations, a decision was made to add contextualisation to these statues until the 2020 Statue Wars 'quickly overtook' that process by toppling one of the more

offensive statues from its pedestal and the local major then announced that all remaining Confederate statues on city-owned land would be removed.

Eager to experiment with the strategies outlined in this collection in ways that also respond to Clare Wright's proposal that we need 'new statues for new heroes', Lindsey offers a hypothetical artist brief for a little-known female colonial artist, republican and mystic named Adelaide Ironside (1831-1867), whose status as a member of the so-called 'native-born' (early generation European-Australians born in the colony) implicates her in Australia's colonial project in ways that demand careful consideration.[19] To address the fact, noted by Baxter, that our memorial landscapes still largely celebrate white men, Lindsey proposes a new monument based upon the Yurong peninsula of the Sydney's Botanic Garden in a place where Ironside once dared to step in the public sphere and assume her own voice before a large male audience.[20] Engaging with ideas proposed by both Ballantyne and Yeats, she also suggests consciously grounding this monument on Gadigal country and surrounding it with the local wildflowers Ironside painted, in ways that might both 're-surface' the First Nation's people and their millennia-old use of these plants and problematise Ironside's status as a colonial agent. Thus, Lindsey, concludes, it may be possible to produce a contemporary monument of a nineteenth-century woman that consciously 'talks back' to the masculine monumentalism of Sydney's statues and subtly 'alter' the stage upon which colonial history is performed in that specific public sphere.

Many contributors have raised questions about the context of the Statue Wars themselves. By concentrating upon the particularities of the COVID-19 context and the police murder of George Floyd, they invite us to consider why in a year when we were repeatedly confined to our homes, did so many suddenly care so much about that which Jess Moody evocative described as 'the lumps of stone and steel' standing silently in our public spheres? Others suggest there are important insights to be gained from framing these recent flashpoints within the Culture Wars which have been raging for several decades and have, as Daley and others notes, drawn into their orbit other debates about placenames, national anniversaries and national curricula. Such contextualisation reminds us that while there was something about these current contestations, those most effected by the legacies of these statues have, in fact, been speaking out against them for generations. Indeed, we agree with Nathan Sentance that the visual spectacle of the 2020 Statue Wars has the potential to distract from the pressing issues raised by the Black Lives Matter protests in ways that divert our attention from addressing the systemic injustice which still underpins our societies. Rather than get caught up in the bitter tug-and-war about these objects, our energies would be better spent, he argues, in asking why the government deemed it appropriate to spent taxpayer funds protecting these late nineteenth-century blocks of stone and steel when they did nothing to stop the mining company, Rio Tinto, from destroying Juukan Gorge in Western Australia earlier that year, despite the fact that this site was over 46,000 years old and inarguably of much greater cultural significance. We might also reflect upon the bitter irony, that when police arrested people for contravening COVID-19 lockdown restrictions at the Cook statue in June 2020, those protestors were calling for an end to the endemic discrimination which ensures First Nations people not only continue to be overrepresented in statistics relating to deaths in custody but still suffer the worse life expectancy in Australia.

'There is no easy way of settling our history or coming to terms with it', Ballantyne reminds us. It requires curiosity and a willingness to be uncomfortable, as well as empathy and sensitivity to reckon with these painful and problematic pasts. Very often, as this collection shows, tempers are frayed as people explode from sheer frustration or the terror of having their tenuous grasp of 'the comfortable' present challenged. While we agree with Nathan Sentance that satisfactory solutions to the removal or revision of statues can create a false sense of resolution for societies which must keep reckoning with the unfinished business of the past, this collection offers many examples of the sorts of productive roles that public historians can perform as they collaborate with communities which are struggling to accommodate divergent perspectives, acknowledge painful legacies and engage with greater truth-telling and healing. Indeed, we hope that by

actively participating in such activities public historians are not only able to encourage more diverse and dynamic forms of history making but to also cultivate the sort of conscious and collaborative collective skills we so desperately need if we are to create, as Sentance rightly insists, 'a more just society'.

Endnotes

1. This opening narrative is based upon both the newspaper evidence cited below and that which Canadian historian, Natalie Zemon Davis first referred to as 'informed imagination'. It is indicative of 'the speculative method' Lindsey has developed and theoretically reflected upon throughout her Australian Research Council Discovery Early Career Research Award, DE180100379, 'Historical craft, speculative biography and the case of Adelaide Ironside', 2018-2021. For further discussion, see, Kiera Lindsey, 'The Speculative Method: scientific guesswork and narrative as laboratory', in Donna Brien and Kiera Lindsey, *Speculative Biography: Opportunities, Experiments and Provocations*, Routledge, New York, 2021. While many details of the 1879 unveiling of Cook's statue, have been taken from newspapers, we cannot confirm the presence of the two union mates at this event, nor their consumption of peanuts.

2. 'Our Illustrations', *Illustrated Sydney News and New South Wales Agriculturalist and Grazier*, 22 March 1879, p6. Retrieved 12 June 2021, from http://nla.gov.au/nla.news-article63335424.

3. Louella McCarthy and Paul Ashton (eds), *Sydney Open Museum Historical Survey*, Sydney City Council, 1994, item 21, pp1-3; i-iii.

4. Much has been written about Henry Parkes, the most recent biography is by Stephen Dando-Collins, *Sir Henry Parkes: the Australian Colossus*, Melbourne, Vintage Australia, 2014. A most useful reference the early career of Henry Parkes can be found in Peter Cochrane, *Colonial Ambition: Foundations of Australian Democracy*, Melbourne University Press, 2006.

5. ibid.

6. McCarthy and Ashton, op cit.

7. ibid. See also Caroline Anne Clemente, 'Thomas Woolner: a Pre-Raphaelite Sculptor in Australia', *Australasian Journal of Victorian Studies*, vol 22, no 2, 2018, pp24-46: https://openjournals.library.sydney.edu.au/index.php/AJVS/article/view/10972 (accessed 17 June 2021).

8. Our Illustrations, op cit, 1878 March 22.

9. Rachel Clun, 'Police officer made gesture associated with white power at Sydney rally', *Sydney Morning Herald*, 13 June 2020, https://www.smh.com.au/national/nsw/police-officer-made-gesture-associated-with-white-power-at-sydney-rally-20200613-p55295.html.

10. Chris Healy, *From the Ruins of Colonialism: History as Social Memory,* Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, 1997, p23.

11. Mariko Smith, Tear It Down, *Australian Museum website*, 2020 https://australian.museum/learn/first-nations/tear-it-down/ (accessed 13 June 2021).

12. Our thanks to Jenny Gregory who refers to Lisa Murray in Andrew Taylor, 'Historian questions whether graffiti should have been left on Captain Cook statue', *Sydney Morning Herald*, 18 April 2018 (Online). Available: https://www.smh.com.au/national/nsw/historian-captain-cook-statue-graffiti-indigenous-20180418-p4zade.html (accessed 16 April 2019).

13. At the time of the BLM protests both the Australian and Great British prime ministers, Scott Morrison and Boris Johnston spoke in favour of protecting statues due to their historical value. See Kate Burgess, '"This is not a licence for people to just go nuts", Scott Morrison condemns statue toppling', *Canberra Times*, 11 June 2020, https://www.canberratimes.com.au/story/6788991/this-is-not-a-licence-for-people-to-just-go-nuts-pm-condemns-statue-toppling/; 'Peter Walker, Alexandra Topping and Steven Morrison, 'Boris Johnson says removing statues is 'to lie about our history', *Guardian*, 12 June 2020. Then American President Donald Trump enacted legislation in 2020 to protect statues: https://www.bbc.com/news/world-us-canada-53201784. See legislation "Protecting American Monuments, Memorials, and Statues and Combating Recent Criminal Violence" (Executive Order 13933): https://www.federalregister.gov/documents/2020/07/02/2020-14509/protecting-american-monuments-memorials-and-statues-and-combating-recent-criminal-violence. The term 'relaxed and comfortable' was coined by Prime Minister John Howard (1996-2007) in reaction to what he deemed an excessively negative view of Australian history promulgated during the leadership of the previous prime minister, Paul Keating (1992-1996). Historian Judith Brett discussed the development and context of this term in Judith Brett, 'Relaxed and Comfortable: The Liberal Party's Australia', *Quarterly Essay*, 1 August 2005, Black Inc. books.

14. 'History Now: Statue Wars: Vandalism or Vindication and what to do with the empty plinth', History Council of New South Wales, 20 July 2020, first posted 13 September 2020: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=1Iir4UL2Voo.

15. 'Public Protests and Public Histories: The Statue Wars, Part 2', 11 August 2020 https://www.facebook.com/watch/live/?v=972479913267957&ref=watch_permalink

16. *Unsettled* is a temporary exhibition showing at the Australian Museum, Sydney from 22 May to 10 October 2021 in the Museum's new basement touring exhibition space. It is First Nations-led and -informed truth-telling exhibition about Australia's foundational history: https://australian.museum/exhibition/unsettled/.

17. Ruben Rose-Redwood and Wil Patrick, 'Why activists are vandalizing statues to colonialism', *The Conversation*, 18 March 2020, https://theconversation.com/why-activists-are-vandalizing-statues-to-colonialism-129750 (accessed 27 Aug 2020).

18. Posted online 16 June 2020 available at https://www.abc.net.au/news/2020-06-16/four-ways-to-help-settle-australias-colonial-statue-debate/12356234 (accessed 18 November 2020).

19. Thanks again to Jenny Gregory who provided the quote from Clare Wright, 'Where are the memorials to our female freedom fighters?', *Guardian Australia*, 8 March 2019 (Online). Available: https://www.theguardian.com/commentisfree/2019/mar/08/where-are-the-memorials-to-our-female-freedom-fighters (Accessed 19 June 2019).

20. For further discussion see Lindsey's contribution. An example of the newspaper coverage associated with this event is, 'Presentation of Colours to the Volunteer Corps', *People's Advocate*, 23 June 1855, p2.